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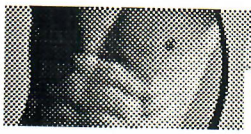

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Top Stories Headlines

Monday October 22 7:24 AM ET

Thousands Rally in Calif. Behind Lee

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) - More than 3,000 people rallied behind U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, the only member of Congress to oppose a resolution granting President Bush authority to use force against terrorists.

The crowd in downtown Oakland erupted in cheers Sunday when actor Danny Glover walked Lee to the podium about two hours into the rally. Glover called Lee a hero. Alice Walker, the writer, called her inspiring.

Lee thanked the crowd profusely for their support, following songs, poetry and speeches in her honor.

The Democrat's decision has won both admiration and derision from California's 9th district which includes the historically dovish cities of Oakland and Berkeley. It also prompted more than 50,000 letters and e-mails from around the nation of similarly divided reaction.

She has explained her recent dissent as an appeal for restraint.

``We must be careful not to embark on an open-ended war with neither an exit strategy nor a focused target," Lee told her colleagues last month. She later voted to spend $40 billion on anti-terror and disaster relief.

Last week, former state Assemblywoman Audie Bock announced she would run against Lee in the March Democratic primary, and already had geared up a patriotic-themed campaign called it's ``OK to love America."

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Earlier Stories

Rep. Barbara Lee Faces Challenge (October 18)

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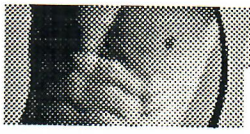

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Top Stories Headlines

Friday October 19 8:45 PM ET

Joint Strike Fighter Not Ready Yet

By SUZANNE GAMBOA, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Production should be delayed for a next-generation fighter jet that is the subject of the largest Pentagon contract ever because the jet's technology isn't at a high enough standard, congressional investigators said Friday.

The finding by the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative arm, comes one week before the Pentagon is to award the Joint Strike Fighter's $225 billion production contract.

The GAO said in a report that the jet will cost more, take longer to produce and have performance problems if it goes forward.

Boeing Co. is competing with Lockheed Martin Corp. for the contract. The fighter will serve the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Marines as well as Britain's Royal Navy. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said Friday no decision has been made on who will get the contract.

The revolutionary warplane is designed to combine supersonic speeds with the ability to hover and will have radar-baffling stealth technology.

But the GAO said the jet's technologies have not been fully developed for its size, weight and configuration. It also said the technologies have only been shown to work in ground tests and some still are in the laboratory phase.

``We disagree with the DOD's assertion that technology is mature enough," the GAO said.

The report did not describe the technologies because of the contract competition between Boeing and Lockheed Martin. The GAO had similar findings in a May 2000 report.

The GAO said if the Defense Department chooses not to delay the program then the agency should dedicate resources to ensure that critical technologies are shown to be ready.

In a written response, the Pentagon said it conducted an independent review that showed the technology is developed enough to move forward.

``We believe that the technologies are there to go into the next phase," said Cheryl Irwin, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

But the GAO said the Defense Department used the wrong tools for assessing the technologies' risks.

Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., who chairs the House Appropriations national security subcommittee, sent a letter to Rumsfeld and other congressional members outlining the GAO's findings.

His office said Shays did not take a position on whether the jet's development should move forward.

Rick Fuller, a Boeing spokesman who had not read the report, said the technology is the most advanced in the world at this time. He also said ``hundreds and hundreds" of airborne tests had been conducted on the jet's technology.

``All that has exceeded expectations," he said.

The contract to be awarded calls for building 3,000 planes for the United States and Britain. If other countries decide to replace their jets with the jet, the contractor could build another 3,000.

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On the Net:

General Accounting Office: http://www.gao.gov

Department of Defense: http://www.defenselink.mil/

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